

1 Timothy 3:1-16

Prayer - Handout on qualifications (Uploaded with this lesson). An outline is provided at the end of this study.

READ 1 Tim. All of Chapter 3

IV. Qualifications for church leadership (3:1-13)

a) **Introduction, the ministry – a “trustworthy,” noble, essential, God gifted task to be desired.**

i. Context Continuation

- This section begins with the second of Paul’s “trustworthy” sayings. You may recall the first one in chapter 1, verse 15, which announced the reason for the incarnation: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...”
- It is important that we understand there is NO major shift in subject matter from chapter 2.
- Remember, the topic is still proper conduct (3:15) in the “household of God,” and now Paul wants to address proper qualifications for church leaders specifically.
- Of course, this is especially important given the **presence of the false teachers at Ephesus**, some of whom are still in the church!
- These qualifications shine light on how NOT qualified the false teachers were for the gospel ministry!
- In the original context, what Paul is about to specify to Timothy will meet his immediate need, **but beyond this (which is very important), the apostle’s instructions apply to the church of Christ in every age!**
- These **qualifications were not only for the church's needs in Ephesus** in the first century; they were for the church throughout **history.**

ii. Gifts to the Church of Christ

- The apostle now outlines what is necessary for effective leadership in Christ’s Church.

- This is because **godly leadership in a bible believing church is truly a gift of God to His church.**
- Open your bible, please, to **Ephesians chapter 4.**
- **READ Ephesians 4:1-16.**
- After the Lord Jesus suffered and died for sinners on the cross, he arose from the tomb **and** appeared to many people in His resurrected body. Chapter one of the Book of Acts reveals that as the people watched, Jesus was lifted up into the clouds and taken to heaven.
- **Of course, we call this the Ascension.** The passage we just read in Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus, inspired by the Holy Spirit, states **that Christ gave "gifts to his church" for a very specific purpose.**
- **Look at verse 12 of Ephesians 4.** This verse states that gifts are specifically "**for equipping the saints for the work of ministry and for building up the body of Christ.**"
- Our blessed Savior and LORD, in His great love, **knowing the exact needs of HIS bride the church** and knowing what is needed in this sin-cursed world, provided exactly what was necessary.
- **READ verse 11 of Ephesians 4!**
- The First Apostles and Prophets were given to the church only temporarily. **How do we know this? Read Ephesians 2:20.**
- **The gifts of apostles and prophets were intended to be "foundational" gifts.**
- Once the foundation, namely the canon of Scripture, was completed and established, prophets who spoke revelations from God were no longer necessary.
- The office of an Apostle of Christ would also end. To be an apostle of Christ, **one had to be a witness of the resurrected Christ.** And of course, at some point, they would all die.

b) Offices in the church of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:1)

- **In your outline**, we now turn to Offices in Christ's church.
- i. **Three introductory comments**

- As we start this section, I want to make three important **introductory comments**.

- 1) **First**, the New Testament clearly teaches us that there are **two biblical church offices. What are they?**
 - **Philippians 1:1** – “Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, *with the overseers and deacons.*”
 - This may seem very basic, but **other non-biblical “offices” have been added throughout the church's history.**
 - Thus, **we have a variety of hierarchical structures.** Roman Catholicism is one example. It has created the offices of a Pope, Cardinals, Bishops, and Priests, down to the average so-called laity.
 - How can that be supported in Scripture as the norm for the church? **It can't!**
 - It's not just Catholicism! The Church of England's hierarchy of “archbishops” and “archdeacons” is also NOT supported in the Word of God.
 - This is not the pattern of the early church. **I have no doubt that the enemy of our souls and the enemy of the church of Christ loves to create confusion and distract from God's simple plan of Elders, Deacons, and saints!**
- 2) **Secondly, a general statement of the overall importance of these two offices!**
 - In every city, Paul **was anxious to establish eldership** in the churches.
 - **READ Acts 14:21-23** in **EVERY** church. This was **NOT an afterthought**. This was then, and is to this day, a **very high priority**.
 - The main truth to remember, and this is vitally important, is that with the role of an Elder comes the responsibility to lovingly and willingly teach and guide God's people with the authority that God grants to the man in that position.
 - God has **ordained shepherds** for His flock! The **Apostle Peter** writing to Elders in 1 Peter 5:1-4 says.
 - “Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, **exercising oversight (there is the authority)** not under compulsion, **but voluntarily, (there is the willingness)** according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor

yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory” (1 Peter 5:1-4 NASB).

- Hebrews 13:7 – “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, **as those who will have to give an account**. Let them **do this with joy** and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.”
 - As Paul is writing the **letter to Titus, notice the urgency in Paul’s tone** as he writes. Titus 1:5 It is the very reason that Titus is in Crete!
 - **“For this reason, I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you.**
 - We could go on with other examples, but I want us to **recognize the stress that the New Testament places on the important need for godly (lovingly and gracious) men to serve in the eldership.**
 - Along with **the important office of an Elder is the important office of a Deacon.**
 - The sixth chapter of Acts is the classic New Testament example, highlighting **the importance and necessity of deacons serving in the church.**
 - **Please turn to that chapter.** I trust we are all familiar with this text. In the early church, it seems that non-Jewish widows were overlooked in the daily distribution of food. **Something had to be done to avoid disunity** and to prevent people from hearing the Word of Salvation in Christ.
 - Most would agree that chapter six of Acts is the classic example of the origins of the office of the diaconate.
 - **READ Acts 6:1-7**
 - **What is so critical, and we must NOT miss it, is how the work of the deacons advanced the spread of the Gospel. The Gospel advanced!**
 - The appointed elders were freed up to pray and preach!
- 3) The **third and last introductory** comment I’ll make is that in the New Testament, references to **elders, shepherds, pastors, bishops, and overseers** are generally **interchangeable**. There are many examples of this.

- This is seen clearly in Acts 20, when Paul meets with the **elders πρεσβυτέρους** of the church in Ephesus, as he calls them in Acts 20:17.
- Then in 20:28, Paul says to these same **elders**: *Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers [or bishops ἐπισκόπους]. Be shepherds [or pastors (ποιμαίνειν)] of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.*
- In Titus 1, Paul says in v. 5 that he left Titus in Crete so that he would make sure there were **πρεσβυτέρους, elders** in every town.
- Then, after giving some qualifications for such service in v. 6, he goes on in v. 7 referring to the same person as an **ἐπίσκοπον**, a **bishop or overseer**.
- In these passages and many others, it is clear that in the New Testament, Christians often interchangeably refer to **elders, shepherds, pastors, bishops, and overseers**.
- In fact, the Greek **πρεσβυτέρους, elder, and ἐπίσκοπον, bishop/overseer, were two titles for the very same office.**

ii. Presbyter/Overseer: (3:1-7)

1. **Presbyter/Elder: Jewish origin** - denoting seniority and dignity
 - The Greek word **πρεσβύτ** is translated in our Bibles usually as **elder** but in some translations' presbyter.
 - Question – **Why multiple titles** for the same office in the New Testament?
 - I have a few numbers to give us an idea of the **frequency of word usage** for **elder, elders (plural), and presbyter.**
 - Words with the **πρεσβύτ** root occur **75 times** in the NT. Nine of those occurrences refer to **people of chronologically more advanced age**. Twelve times in Revelation, John uses the word to refer to the heavenly **elders**.
 - **The term is used twenty-nine times (all in the Gospels and Acts)** to refer to the **Jewish non-priestly leaders in the Sanhedrin** and local synagogues.

- The word refers to elders in churches about 20 times: in the Jerusalem church, in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, in Ephesus, in the towns of Crete, and other general areas.
- The Jews of Jesus' day had members of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem known as elders. Local synagogues also had groups of ruling men called elders.
- It is very likely that the **word for elder, which has Jewish origins, was carried over from the synagogue and used within the church.**
- **Acts 1:8 tells us the gospel was proclaimed from Jerusalem, and all Judea (which the word Elder was used and would of course be Jewish origins) and Samaria, and beyond (Greeks) which the word overseer would be more common.**
- We can't take the time now to trace the use of this word for Elder, but its **true biblical origins are found in the Old Testament.**
- Let me read Numbers chapter 11:24-25.
- The apostles undoubtedly **applied this leadership model naturally** as new churches were established.
- Most often, **which is important**, there is a **plurality of men**. In chapter 4, verse 14, Paul calls them the “council of elders.” **READ it.**
- The **model for church leadership** we find in the New Testament is **NOT one man being the sole leader!**
- **It is NOT one man being the “captain” of the ship!** When providential circumstances allow it, a **plurality of Elders is the desired leadership structure.**
- Notice **the first sentence when Paul writes to the church in Philippi that he first stresses the saints!**
- **“To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons.”**

Matthew Henry commented on this verse: "Paul mentions the church before the ministers because the ministers are for the churches." Not the other way around!

- To summarize this point. The biblical pattern is for a **group, or plurality of elders, to provide joint oversight** to a local congregation, with one or several pastors **primarily devoted** to teaching and providing pastoral care.
- 2. Overseer/Bishop: Greek origin - denoting function, pastoral oversight**
- The Greek word **ἐπίσκοπονς** is translated in our bibles as either overseer or bishop. I have already noted that these words and the term for Elder are synonymous.
 - Overseer refers to the function.** The function of **giving oversight to the church.**
 - It is a **noble, honorable task**. However, it is NOT suitable for everyone! If you aspire to and aim **to serve as an overseer**, you desire good work in God's eyes.
 - This honorable task itself is to rule lovingly and lovingly teach.**
 - All elders must be able to teach, though some elders are more gifted in teaching than others. Some elders are more gifted in lovingly ruling God's people than others.
 - 1 Timothy 5:17 indicates there **may be teaching and ruling elders.**
 - Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.** 1 Timothy 5:17.
 - Now, starting in **verse 2**, the Holy Spirit provides the **necessary qualifications** that a man must possess to serve in the office of elder!

3. Structure of passage (3:1-7)

- On your outline number 3 of this section.** The **structure of the section, verses 1-7 of chapter 3, is divided into three parts.**
- Part 1. First,** Paul **commends the office** of overseer. It is "good work," a "noble" task. If a man desires to serve in this capacity and has the necessary gifts and meets the qualifications, **it is a good and desirable work**
- The church of Christ needs godly men with a servant's heart who seek to bring glory to the Savior rather **than to themselves.**

- The **first quality is more or less a summary or sum total of all the qualities.**
- He must be “**above reproach**,” meaning “cannot be laid hold of.”
- In other words, there **is no questionable conduct and no true accusations against the man**. No one suspects the person of any wrongdoing, so **no charges against him can stick!**
- All the qualities that Paul gives us essentially elaborate **on what it means to be above reproach**. “**Umbrella Saying**” **All other qualities fit under the above reproach.**
- **In the second part**, the apostle **lists eleven qualities** that must be possessed and evident in the life of an overseer (vv2-3)
- Go over the **handout on Elder Qualifications.**
- Qualifications are placed in **4 categories. Personal, Public, Family, and Ministry.**
- All these qualities, except **being able to teach**, are qualities **ALL believers in Christ should strive to be like**.
- It is part of growing in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, **our sanctification**, our being conformed to the image of Christ.
- **Thirdly**, Paul addresses **three specific situations**.
 - 1) **Situation #1** - An overseer must manage his household well. (v4-5)
 - 2) **Situation #2** - He should NOT be a new convert (v6).
 - 3) **Situation #3** - He must be well thought of by non-Christians. (v.7)
- In these three situations, the **apostle gives us specific reasons why the quality is necessary**.
- **Reason #1** - If an overseer cannot manage his own family, he cannot manage God’s household.
- **Reason #2** - If an overseer is a recent convert, he may become conceited and fall into the same condemnation of the devil. **Satan fell because of his pride and arrogance!**
- **Reason #3** - The overseer must have a **solid reputation**, or else he may be caught in Satan’s snare.

- The apostle **begins the list and ends the list on a similar note.**
- In **verse 2**, the overseer should be **above reproach**, and **verse 7**, he must be **well thought of** by those outside the faith. Both are similar.
- Paul is **greatly concerned with what non-Christians think of the church**. In other words, he **wants to guard the reputation of God's people**.
- Paul often expresses **this concern in the Pastoral Epistles**. It undoubtedly stems from a deep desire to honor Jesus Christ and advance the gospel.

iii. Office of Deacon (3:8-13)

- Let's turn our attention now to the second church office—**the office of the Deacons**.
- **READ 3:8-13**
- In **verse 8**, the word “likewise” helps us understand Paul’s idea of this being a second church office.
- In other words, Paul is saying that “**in the same way**” that I’ve given certain instructions for choosing an overseer, **here are my specific instructions for the kind of person who would be a church deacon**.
- The word **deacon itself means servant.**
- The word is used in different ways **in the New Testament**. Sometimes, it refers to a deacon, but other times, it refers to someone who simply serves others.
- For example, in Matthew 10:24, Jesus said, “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a **servant** above his master.” The word in Greek for servant is the exact same word, in the plural form, that Paul uses in chapter 3, verse 8.
- The point is that **context is always your best guide to the author’s meaning of a word.**
- The **similarity of the deacon list to the overseer list shows much overlap**. In fact, of the **nine qualifications Paul gives for the office of Deacon** (if we count **verse 11 as one quality**, more on that shortly), **six** are direct parallels to qualifications required of an elder.
- **These six are:**
 - 1) Dignified (though synonyms are used)
 - 2) Not drunkards

- 3) Not greedy
 - 4) Blameless
 - 5) A man committed to one woman only.
 - 6) Good household managers.
 - Verse 13 ends the list with a word of encouragement.
 - Unlike the lists for elders in both 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, Paul does NOT begin with the words “**above reproach**.”
 - He begins by saying **deacons must have “dignity.”** This will be repeated in verse 11 when he refers to the wives of deacons.
 - Speaking of verse 11, you should know that there has **been much discussion and debate, and many books and articles** have been written on whether Paul is referring to **wives or women deacons in this verse.**
 - Many wonderful Bible commentators hold both views. I tend to interpret this verse as referring to elders' wives rather than women deacons. I don't believe Paul is referring to a new office called deaconess.
 - We will discuss this further in a moment.
- The diaconate qualifications can be grouped into four categories, based on John Stott's commentary.
- 1) **Self-Mastery:** Dignified, no “double tongue,” “not addicted to much wine,” “not greedy.”
 - 2) **Orthodox Convictions:** Holds to the “mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.”
 - 3) **Tested and approved:** Examined by the Church, period of testing, proven to be blameless.
 - 4) **Home Life:** wives dignified, not slanderous, sober-minded, and faithful.
- There are **some differences** between the lists of deacons and elders. One particularly stands out. What is that?
 - Notice that a **deacon is NOT required to teach.** Of course, deacons can and do teach in many churches, but Paul says they are **not required** to.
 - **Part of the examination of a deacon includes an examination of his wife's character.**

- Often, a deacon's wife is very much involved in her husband's ministry. Perhaps even more so than the wife of an elder.
- I think we all understand that there are life situations in **which a deacon's wife is more suitable for helping another woman than her husband.**
- Another **difference in the two lists** is that a **deacon is NOT required to be hospitable** (apart from the hospitality required of all believers).
- Also, a **deacon is to be tested first**, whereas for **an elder, no mention is made of testing, only that they must not be new converts.**
- **When we examine Titus, we will see that the requirement to not be a new convert is not included.**
- In **chapter 5 verse 22**, Paul writes, “**Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands,**” which **might refer to the ordination of an elder.**
- Though not part of our text in 1 Timothy, on your handout, I've listed some of the duties of a deacon.
- They **are responsible for many practical and benevolent needs.**
- First, **for the believers in the household of faith, but also for the poor and needy inside and outside the church.**
- My church has a benevolent fund dedicated to helping the needs of God's people and any other person God providentially brings our way.
- On **Sunday nights, when we have the Lord's supper, the offering is dedicated to benevolence, in which our deacons oversee its distribution.**
- The fact that deacons must not be “**greedy for dishonest gain**” may suggest oversight of the church's purse and budget.
- **Review Strauch Article. Go over three views of verse 11.**

V. Purpose Statement (3:1-14-16)

A) Priority of Christ's Church

- We come now in our outline to **Roman Numeral V** and the section entitled **“Purpose Statement.”**
- **READ 3:14-16**

- In his excellent study of the Pastoral Letters, William Mounce calls these few verses the “**Heart of the Corpus**.”
- **First**, in this section, the Apostle Paul teaches us a **priority of the church**.
- It is clear from these words that he has “written these things” because he expects a possible delay in arriving at Ephesus and because he wants the Christian to know right away what appropriate conduct must be in God’s house.
- It is a very serious matter that the “living God” (as Paul refers to God) wants his church to display what the truth must look like within the body of Christ. REPEAT.
- The church must accept Scripture's teachings because it is the pillar (very foundation) and protector of God's Holy Word.
- The church is responsible for protecting and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations. This charge from Paul is no wonder it is so important.
- This is precisely what the false teachers were NOT doing at Ephesus. They were not guarding God's truth and bringing dishonor to the name of Christ.

B) Hymn of praise to the LORD Jesus Christ

- Lastly, to finish this section, in Verse 16, the **Apostle Paul seems to close it out by using what many believe to be part of a hymn** used by the early church.
- However, as is often the case in this letter, people have various opinions about **the verse's actual meaning**.
- I'm going to briefly review the meaning as presented by Dr. Bill Mounce in his commentary. I tend to agree with Dr. Mounce, but some teachers and scholars know much more than I do and take a different approach!
- According to Dr. Mounce, there are two stanzas with three lines in each stanza.
- The first stanza is a trilogy of the life of Christ.
- The second stanza refers to the reception of His work.
- The first stanza describes the incarnation (the first line manifested in the flesh), the resurrection (the second line, vindicated by the

**Spirit), and the ascension into heaven, where Christ would be (the
third line seen by angels).**

- **The second stanza shows the proper response.**
- **That is, the church preaches the gospel of Christ (1st line of stanza proclaimed among the nations), so people can come to faith (2nd line of stanza believed on in the world), resulting in glorifying the Lord Jesus (3rd line of stanza taken up into glory).**
- To summarize, the Apostle Paul declares that the church has been entrusted with the truth—the truth we sing about Christ in this hymn!
- Since that is the case, Timothy, all Pastors, all teachers, **and you who seek to serve Christ, hold on to it at all costs! Watch out for false teachers and the devil's lies!**
- This will lead us to what the Holy Spirit tells us starting in chapter four. Here, the Apostle Paul returns to the matter of false teachers.

I Timothy 2:1-3:16 Outline

I. Congregational prayer and proper objects of prayer (2:1-2)

- a) Scope
 - i. Priority – “First of all.”
 - ii. Wide and broad - “all”
 - iii. Contrast with false teachers
 - iv. Types of prayers
- v. Purpose – Quiet and peaceful life

II. The Grounds/Foundation for Congregational Prayer (2:3-2:8)

- a) The basis for the Apostle Paul’s appeal
 - i. Good and acceptable
 - ii. Desire of God – “all”
 - iii. Not “universalism.”
- b) Evidence and proof that show God’s saving desire
 - i. Three theological doctrines

- a) Oneness of God
- b) Christ the mediator
- c) Christ's death secures redemption.

ii. The Ransom

iii. Paul's calling

III. Status and Conduct of Christian Women (2:9-15)

- a) Guiding Fundamental Principles
 - i. #1
 - ii. #2
 - iii. #3
- b) A woman's dress, demeanor, activities (2:9-10)
 - i. External beauty
 - ii. Internal beauty

- iii. Priority
- c) A woman's behavior (2:11-14)
 - i. Meaning of the text
- ii. Significance of the text/reasons for prohibition
- d) A woman's "salvation" (2:15)
 - i. Two presuppositions
 - ii. Two interpretations

IV. Qualifications for Church Leadership (3:1-13)

- a) Introduction: The ministry – a noble, essential, **God gifted** task to be desired
 - i. Context continuation
 - ii. Gifts to the Church of Christ (Ephesians 4:1-16)
- b) Offices in the church of Jesus Christ
 - i. Three introductory comments

1. Philippians 1:1

2. Importance of the offices

3. Interchangeable words

ii. Presbyter/Overseer: (3:1-7)

4. Presbyter/Elder: Jewish origin - denoting seniority and dignity

5. Overseer/Bishop: Greek origin - denoting function, pastoral oversight

6. Structure of passage (v. 1-7)

i. Desire and commendation

ii. Eleven qualifications (see handout)

iii. Three specific situations and three specific reasons

- Situation/Reason #1

- Situation/Reason #2
 - Situation/Reason #3

iii. Office of Deacon (3:8-13)

 1. Overlap with elder list.
 - i. Similarities
 - ii. Dissimilarities
 2. “Wives” or “Women” verse 11
 3. Qualification List (handout)

- i. Self-Mastery
- ii. Orthodox convictions
- iii. Tested and approved.
- iv. Home Life

4. Deacon duties/functions

V. Purpose statement – “Heart of corpus” (3:14-16)

- a) Priority of Christ’s Church.
- b) Hymn of praise to the LORD Jesus Christ.
 - i. Stanza 1
 - ii. Stanza 2